



Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice

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Hello, my name is Max E. Ballardo and I am speaking in behalf of Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice in favor of bill SB 59, an act prohibiting the sale or use of fishing sinkers, jigs and tire weights that contain lead.

I would like to speak to the issue of eliminating lead in fishing gear.

Lead is a malleably indestructible metal. Unfortunately, its characteristics and inexpensive cost make it commonly used in many products, such as tire weights and fishing weights.

Lead is highly poisonous when entering a life organism such as animals, plants and humans. They can also be found in inanimate compounds as air, water, soil and dust.

When lead fishing sinkers and jigs are lost in the water they become a hazard to the fauna and they pollute our waters. Birds such as loons ingest them inadvertently when they mistaken them for stones they use to grind their food. They might also swallow them to regulate their digestive system. Other animals such as eagles get poisoned when they consume fish that has ingested lead. When any of these birds or others is poisoned with lead their nervous system fails. They become weak until the point they die within two or three weeks or become an easy prey.

When lead is used it poses a danger to our waters, fauna and us. There are safer alternatives and we have failed to push for a regulation that would help regulate the use of lead. Some of these alternatives are tin, bismuth, steel, various alloys, porcelain, and water stones.

Lead's only purpose in fishing gear is to merely add weight. This characteristic does not make lead indispensable in our lives!

We need a more comprehensive chemical reform to promote healthy living in our state and set an example to other states. Ahead of us, states as New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts have a ban on lead of certain weight. Lead is also banned in two national parks and encouraged not to be used in many other states.

We urge you to ban lead in all fishing gear.

Please help us protect our fauna and waters for our future generations.

Thanks,